



Bowling Green Police Officer
Jason Franks

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Driven. Leader. Father: all describe Bowling Green Police Officer Jason Frank’s perspective on his life and career. It’s not an attitude he takes lightly. After joining the military at 17, Franks, now 28, has made it his mission to show the citizens of Bowling Green what leadership means. After just four years with the department, Franks has earned a reputation with the people in his community and his fellow officers. But, equally importantly, he recognizes his commitment to making it home each night to his wife and two little girls.

I’ve always wanted to travel. I always wanted to get into police work. I was at career day and saw the Army National Guard booth. Coming from a low-income family, I thought it would be a good way to get my college paid for and help build skills I would need to be a police officer. So I had my parents sign the paperwork, shipped off to basic and served my time. I was (active) in the guard six years before joining the police department.

My family are generations of loggers and farmers. I grew up doing that all my childhood. But, I would watch movies and TV and I would see the police officers in town. As a little kid, I was fascinated by it. I told myself, “That’s what I’m going to do.”

As a kid, you think it’s all about catching the bad guys and writing tickets. That is a part of what we do, there is so much more to being a police officer. It’s also about policing yourself and leading by example. As a police officer, you are a leader in the community. It’s about helping people with regular, everyday problems.

I love second shift. It is probably the busiest shift, but it also has the most diversity of calls. Early in a shift you might respond to a school and deal with some juvenile issues. Toward the end of your shift you might be going to some of the local bars and dealing with those issues. In the middle, it may be anything from traffic collisions to domestic calls. The busier the better.

Whenever I talk with someone, whether it is an information call or an actual call for service, I introduce myself and hand them my business card. I always tell everybody, “If you have a problem, I want you to call and let me know.” Most people assume police officers are all knowing. I tell people it’s a joint effort between us and the community. As police, if we don’t know about a problem, we can’t fix it. It’s a great tool and it helps me

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out in my job tremendously. It also puts a human face to the police department.

I have two girls. They are 3 and 4. My wife, Casey, and I have been married six years. She’s a dispatcher at the sheriff’s office. We met in the military; we were stationed together in Germany. We actually worked the street together for awhile.

My family is in southwestern Tennessee. Her family is in north-central Indiana. So, Kentucky was in the middle. Being married is all about compromise and working with each other. In Kentucky, I had looked at several different police agencies, and everywhere I went, everybody kept mentioning Bowling Green and how professional it was. I decided right from the get-go that’s where I wanted to be.

As a recruit you’re stressed out in the academy. Graduation was one of the high points of my life. It was a big achievement. Then, coming back to Bowling Green and going through the PTO program for 16 weeks — that was another milestone. My very first shift I was sitting down at briefing, then sitting in my cruiser alone, getting ready to go out on solo patrol, I remember saying to myself, “Wow. I’m now the police.” That feeling — that nervousness and excitement and adrenaline rush all mixed into one — there was nothing like that I had ever experienced before.

The military instills values and discipline in you, that you are a leader and that you have to lead by example. That holds true with the police department as well. You have to be that example both at work and at home in your personal life. I think it’s very important that both of those reflect that you practice what you preach.

I am a Critical Response Team member — I’ve been doing that for more than a year. The training you get while being on CRT and the way each team member and our commander pushes each member to better themselves — you become a leader within the police department. I wanted to step up to the plate and be that leader, push myself and expand my skills as a police officer.

I plan to continually try to advance myself at the police department. I believe in any

profession, you should always try to aspire to advance and better yourself and your skills.

Being a police officer hammers home the importance of squaring yourself away, making sure you’re doing what your supposed to be doing and just making the best decisions for yourself and your family — how that can have an impact long term down the road. We see the problems with broken homes, with drug use or abuse in a home. It really shows you that family is important, and you appreciate your family a lot more.

It also hammers home the importance of having something outside of policing that you like to do. A hobby — whether it be hanging out with friends or spending time with family, church, sports — whatever. You really see the importance of having an outlet like that outside the police department. Each day you think you have seen it all, but there is always something you come across on a shift that sticks with you, that you learn from, that you can better yourself from.

Spending time with my girls, running and working out, those are the things I enjoy a lot. I never leave home without telling my girls that I love them and giving them a hug. Of course, they always say, “Daddy, we love you, be careful.” The next morning when they get up and I get them ready for preschool, it’s kind of comical — they always say, “Daddy, did you put any bad guys in jail last night?” I kind of have to chuckle about that.

I tell them that they don’t have to worry about the bad guys. Daddy will worry about the bad guys. They don’t have to worry about it. They are my greatest accomplishments by far. I love my girls.

I have learned one of the most important lessons is talking to people rather than talking down to people. A little bit of respect, compassion and understanding will get you further in this job than anything else. The kindness you show to someone you deal with who’s not being very kind to you may turn into a phone call from that same subject a week down the road with information about a problem you’ve been trying to solve.

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